

SANTA ANA COLLEGE

on wednesday

Representatives of historically black colleges will be on campus to distribute information and answer questions, starting at 11a.m. in the mall.

el Don



INSIDE:

Free falling! One student's exciting account of skydiving from 12,500 feet above ground.

Feature, Page 7

Volume 76, Issue 1

17th at Bristol Street, Santa Ana, California 92706

Monday, February 22, 1999



Photos by Ismael Arellano

Above: Vietnamese Club members celebrate Tet, the Lunar New Year, by dancing to traditional songs.

Right: One of many South Vietnamese flags, displayed at the festival.

• For more on the current Vietnamese flag debate, see VIEWS, page 9.



By Rick Ho
el Don Design Editor

Tet, or the Lunar New Year, is celebrated during the second new moon of Winter in some Asian countries. It usually falls in January or mid-February, and brings with it music, food and festivities.

It represents the beginning of a new lunar calendar, and is the most important holiday of the year. It's like Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years all in one celebration.

Many Vietnamese prepare for the three-day festival by cleaning their homes on the day before

Tet. This is to wash away all the misfortunes of the previous year.

On the first day, some participants go to temples and have their fortunes told by a monk, through a number of activities. The use of coins, numbered sticks or any two-sided objects are instrumental in foretelling the coming year's fortunes or misfortunes.

Extended families come together on the second day, and dress in their best clothes to greet each other with prosperous wishes for the coming year.

Adults exchange delicacies such as tea, cookies and sugar-coated fruits.

Usually exchanged also, are

banh chung and *banh day* cake-like pastries wrapped in bannana leaves.

Made of the same ingredients, *banh chung* is square-shaped to symbolize the earth, while *banh day*, is cylinder-shaped representing the sun.

At these gatherings, adults talk about the possibilities the new year brings.

The children are given red envelopes - known as *Li Xi* - with money in it for luck.

In return, they are required to give the adults their best wishes.

The third day is spent with friends and playing traditional

Please see CAT, Page 3

Theft rate increases

By David Gekchyan
el Don Staff Writer

Car thefts top the list of crimes committed in the Rancho Santiago Community College District according to a security report detailing the past year.

The report also reveals a slight rise in larceny from parked cars and hardware theft from campus computers, particularly at Centennial Education Center

and Santa Ana College.

Parking lot related crime nearly doubled at the Centennial campus, where a ring of car thieves operating within the immediate area stole several vehicles later found stripped and abandoned a short distance from the school.

Toyota Corollas accounted for the largest percentage of cars stolen from district parking lots. Chevrolet Camaros, Nissan Sentras, and Cutlass

Supremes, were also favorite targets.

"Older GMs and Toyotas were more prone to theft because there is a higher demand for parts from those cars," said Al Chin, Lieutenant-supervisor of Safety at Santa Ana College.

The overall number of vehicle break-ins rose only by three incidences, however.

"Most targets of theft are visible," said Chin, "It's not

Please see SAFETY, Page 3

Security Report

1997-98 crime stats for all colleges and campuses.

Aggravated Assaults	2
Liquor Violations	2
Weapons Possession	1
Building Burglaries	4

• Most thefts and break-ins occurred in Lots 7 (Bristol/Washington) and 11 (Track).

• Computer parts (\$11,000) became significant for the first time within the District.

• Top five vehicle thefts were targeted according to vehicle make:

1. Toyota Corolla (60%)
2. Chevy Camaro
3. Nissan Sentra
4. Cutlass Supreme
5. Buick Regal

Crime statistics show an increase in the number of stolen computer and vehicle parts, throughout the district.

PROFILE

IN THE RIGHT PLACE

HUMBLE: Victor Aguila sacrifices time and energy for students.

By J.P. Chabot
el Don Staff Writer

Victor Aguila comes to Santa Ana College every morning.

He's done so since 1978, and he's not leaving any time soon.

In fact, the longer he stays, the more likely he is to become a permanent fixture in the administration department.

Aguila began his stay at SAC as a student majoring in business administration.

"Originally, I wasn't working full time, so I thought of the most casual and social place to go to college," Aguila said, about how he decided to attend classes at SAC.

He was eager to learn and meet new people - young women in particular.

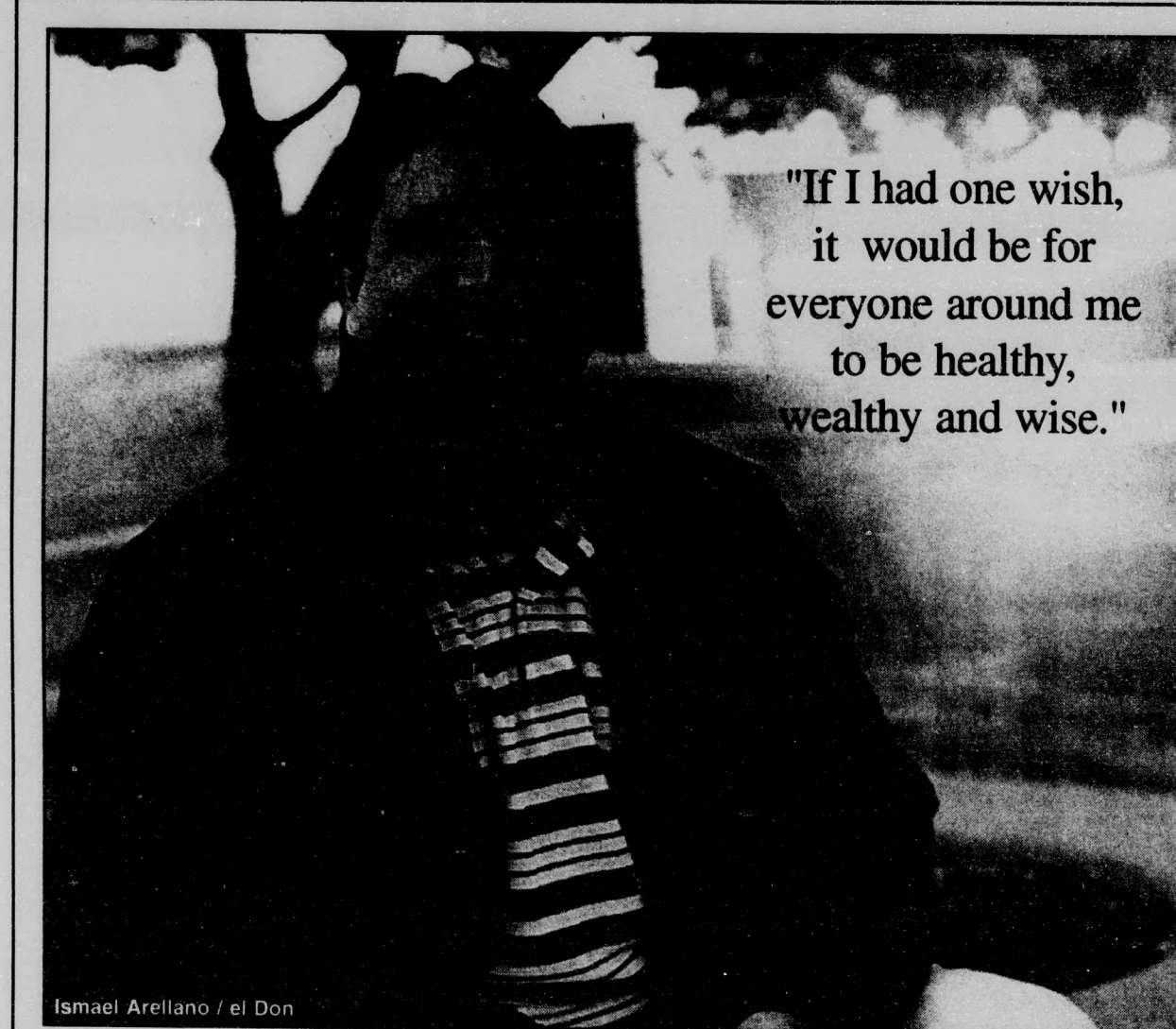
"What influenced my decision was the knowledge that SAC was the safest and best environment to meet lots of women," he said, laughing. "I based my whole education on meeting women and socializing in general. It kept me motivated."

Aguila was quickly hired by the school as a counselor in the registrar's office.

"When I started actually working at the college, my motivation for being here changed," he admitted.

Initially working for the college on a seasonal basis, he took as many classes as possible, in his spare time.

During his tenure as a student, Aguila kept active in



Admissions and records specialist, Victor Aguila, fell in love with the "SAC family" 21 years ago and has worked here ever since. After graduating in 1991, he stayed on staff as full time faculty, serving students with a smile.

"If I had one wish, it would be for everyone around me to be healthy, wealthy and wise."



VITAL STATS

• Born and raised in Santa Ana, and still resides in the city.

• His favorite T.V. show is Star Trek and likes virtually all movies.

• Pineapple ice cream with coconut strips, is one of his favorite desserts.

• Graduated from Santa Ana College in 1991, with associate degrees in business administration, economics, and liberal studies.

• He is currently enrolled in classes at Cal State Fullerton.

sports and even won a handball tournament in 1983.

In his typical selfless manner, he donated the plaque to the school.

He ultimately graduated in 1991, with associate degrees in business administration, economics, and liberal studies.

Since then, he has transferred to Cal State Fullerton and is only one class away from earning a Modern Languages degree.

Throughout Aguila's academic career, he remained a SAC employee.

Hired on a full-time basis in 1989 to work in the admissions office, he immediately liked it.

Aguila's official title is Admissions and Records Specialist I. "Basically, that means I do everything," he said smiling. "My job is helping students with the directions, procedures, and policies for their enrollment in this college, the kind of thing that can be daunting for most students."

His dedication and adversity is also noted by co-workers.

"The part that's most enjoyable about Victor is that he's a man of all seasons," said Linda Miskovic, registrar of the office of admissions and records.

"Sometimes he'll take over the front counter and help three different students with com-

pletely different problems at once. He's also bilingual, which is a big help."

"I always put myself in their position," said Aguila of the students who come to his desk for help. "I say to myself, 'If I was a student, what would I want?' And he's convinced that the answer is good, friendly service."

"I let them know their options and whether or not they can do certain things, and warn them not to try to trick the system."

The admissions office is often considered to be a fishbowl, because the students waiting in line can see all the staff at work. "The students see who's

working, who's goofing off, who's sleeping and who's laughing," said Aguila, who insists that this scrutiny helps staff stay on task.

When asked if he's enjoyed the time spent at SAC he said, "Everything just fell into place. I'm happy. It's not just a job. You buy into the family where everyone knows you. No one is an island. That's great."

"I'm very comfortable with the SAC family," he said.

"Everyone is here to improve themselves and others. I wouldn't trade that atmosphere for anything."

EDUCATION

Students flock to learning alternative

CREDITS: SAC becomes first community college in county to offer classes during Winter break.

By Theresa Salinas
el Don Editor-in-Chief

Instead of bringing in the new year with a night on the town, over 3,000 students prepared for intense intersession classes, that would face them the following week.

The four-week classes, held from Jan. 4 to 29, crammed 16 weeks of instruction into 25 days.

Although some question the effectiveness of material retention in quick study classes, Santa Ana College President John Nixon said that the intersession classes

were created to specifically fit student personality profiles.

"What we've found is that there is a trend, in some students, to take classes in a compressed mode," he said. "We are trying to satisfy that demand, by way of quick study and intersession classes."

In total 3,269 students took advantage of the intersession option, 86 percent of whom were enrolled in fall 1998 courses.

A district survey of 1,269 students shows that 55 participants currently attend other area colleges, such as Cal State Fullerton and Orange Coast College.

"While we have another intersession scheduled for spring 2000, we are now trying to determine who the students are that are taking the courses," said Nixon. "Are

they district students, or just students from Cal State Fullerton trying to complete their G.E. requirements?"

While enrollment figures were high at the beginning of the mini-session, 36 classes were ultimately canceled because of low enrollment.

According to Nixon, these classes were "highly specialized" and catered only to a limited number of students.

In contrast, the most popular classes were general education subjects.

Nixon also said that course selection for the coming year will include more general classes such as English, math and science.

• In the next issue: an in depth look at the teachers and students behind intersession.

INSIDE INTERSESSION

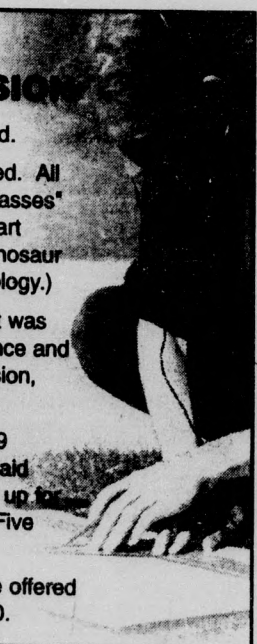
• 128 classes offered.

• 36 classes canceled. All were "specialized classes" (i.e., math tutoring, art portfolio building, dinosaur and earthquake geology.)

• Highest enrollment was in the exercise science and health/athletics division, with 464 students.

• 69 percent of 1,269 students surveyed said that they would sign up for intersession again. Five percent said no.

• Intersession will be offered again in Spring 2000.



More funds means more aid for students

With college enrollment at an all time high, more financial aid is available for those wishing to transfer. All you have to know, is who to ask.

By Veronica Puente
Special to the el Don

Jeannie Pantan will be the first to say that hard work has its rewards.

After four years of good grades, leadership roles and playing sports in high school, Pantan earned a four-year Army ROTC scholarship that allowed her to graduate from the University of Texas at Arlington debt-free.

In return, Pantan will spend the next four years serving in the military.

Pantan's story is a reminder that there are more ways to pay for college than you might think.

Military service is just one.

There are many others, including special-interest scholarships, state and federal

grants, educational loans and work-study programs.

"I think people sometimes believe there aren't opportunities for them to go," Pantan said. "There are avenues."

Now is the time for parents and students, particularly high school seniors, to act if they plan to apply for financial assistance, experts say.

Federal financial aid applications for the 1999-2000 academic year are due by March 1, 1999.

Students can still apply for financial aid after the start of the academic year, but there are benefits to applying early.

Schools often give priority to students who meet their deadlines, she said.

And remember this: College enrollment is at an all-time high.

With enrollment at two-year and four-year public and private colleges and universities reaching nearly 15 million last fall, compared with about 13 million a decade ago, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

"You might have a more favorable package if you apply early, because there's more money available," Pantan said.

The amount of financial aid available to students grew considerably last year.

In 1997-98, more than \$60 billion in federal, state and institutional financial aid was disbursed to students, according to the College Board, an increase of 6 percent over the previous year.

At the same time, the price of college grew an average

4 percent this academic year compared with last, according to the board.

Many students grapple with how to pay for college.

Even with financial aid, many students still have to find other ways to meet costs; awards typically do not cover all college costs.

To be considered for federal and state aid, students must first complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, available at college financial aid offices and libraries and online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

The application, which determines a student's eligibility and how much a family is expected to contribute to a child's education, takes about a month to process.

Several nonfinancial fac-

tors can improve a student's chance for aid, including grades, community involvement, and ACT and SAT test scores.

College financial aid offices and high school counselors can provide information on other scholarships, including those awarded by local professional and service organizations.

Aside from scholarships, students can qualify for grants, educational loans and college work-study programs by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

Like scholarships, grants are popular among students because they do not have to be repaid.

The Pell and Supplemental Please see CASH, Page 4

Safety:

Continued from Page 1

uncommon for thieves to peek in car windows until they find something worth stealing."

Some feel that better nighttime lighting would deter larceny and personal crimes on campus.

"I feel pretty safe on campus," said student Sharon Beltran, "but there needs to be more light on that [west] side of campus."

James Knizek, who works and studies at SAC, echoed similar feelings. "Well, I used to be in the military and worked as a security guard too, so I feel fine no matter where I am, but I know there are others who may not be so confident," he said.

At SAC, security officers were put on alert when four separate vehicle break-ins with similar circumstances occurred during the third week of January.

Items were stolen from all four vehicles after the passenger-side door lock was forcibly removed.

The Santa Ana Police Department was asked to provide visible patrols during the morning hours when the break-ins occurred.

"The number of incidents has dropped dramatically since then though," said Chin.

There is a greater number of cars to choose from when school is in session.

But vehicles are also parked further out toward the perimeter of the campus, where it is easier for thieves to move about without detection.

While larceny from vehicles accounted for the largest number of incidents in the district's report, petty theft, a crime it does not include, is the most common on all campuses.

"I think many people feel that, since this is a community college, they are safe from crime and leave their carelessness in the parking lot on their way to class. Students should pay close attention to their belongings at all times," Chin said.

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MARINE OFFICER

Cat:

Continued from Page 1

Tet games like *Bau Cua* and card games. They usually involve gambling the money you got from the red envelopes to test your luck.

The celebration also includes dragon dances, fire crackers -to chase evil spirits away- and festivals.

This year is the Year of the Cat, a period of prosperity and good fortune. Each year is represented by an animal. Every twelve years the animal is repeated again. The animals are: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig.

If the year ultimately brings bad luck, there's always an opportunity to start all over again, in twelve months.

What's he high on now?

Support

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Ad

District programs provide money for education

By Christie Menzel
el Don Staff Writer

Don't miss out. Santa Ana College is giving cash away to students - while supplies last.

Well, it's not exactly free but it is available to students who qualify.

More than \$100,000 in SAC-sponsored scholarships is up for grabs annually but hundreds of dollars in scholarship monies go unclaimed each year because of the lack of student interest, said Stephanie Adams, SAC scholarship coordinator.

Many students are unaware they are eligible to receive funds annually through a variety of scholarship and financial aid programs offered at SAC.

In hopes to boost student awareness, Adams has taken on the task of visiting classrooms and speaking to students about the benefits of applying.

Hopefully the number of applications will increase while the unused scholarship dollars decrease, she said.

One of the largest scholarship programs available is the Santa Ana Kiwanis Club Academic Scholarship, which gives \$5,000 to Santa Ana residents with a 3.0 GPA. Open to both continuing and transferring students, it also has a low turnout rate.

Last year, letters were sent to 400 eligible students, and only 5 responded.

Virtually anyone fits the qualifications for a scholarship. From extra-curricular activities

and specified majors, to club-affiliations, all are considered for eligibility, Adams said.

Required GPA's can be as low as a 2.0 and award amounts can be as high as \$10,000. Applicants must attend SAC or Santiago Canyon College, be currently registered in classes and have 24 units completed (including works in progress).

Applications must be submitted to the Scholarship Program Office located in the admissions building by March 1, 1999.

Other methods of funding are available through the campus financial aid office.

The most popular is the Board of Governor's Enrollment Fee Waiver which waives the \$12 per unit and \$11 health fee.

Vielma-Schouwe, SAC financial aid director, is con-

cerned that students are not taking advantage of other aid programs that provide more than tuition. Cal Grant B for example, pays for books, supplies, housing and transportation.

Last year 347 students received an average of \$1,160 through the Cal Grant B program. It is also possible, she said, to receive money from multiple financial aid packages.

All financial aid programs, other than the BOGW program, require students to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid form, available in the financial aid office.

"Many students don't go through the application process because they think it is too

time consuming," Vielma-Schouwe said. However, workshops are offered on how to apply for the SAC/SCC scholarships.

The financial aid department also offers a CARE program to help students with child care expenses.

Last year \$9,253,713 was divided among 2,717 qualified students.

General requirements include enrollment in programs geared at completing the Associate's degree, transfer requirements or certificate program.

Applications for Cal Grant programs must be filed March 2, 1999.

For more information call the Scholarship Office at 564-6478 or the Financial Aid Office at 564-6242.

Student Appreciation Days



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Cash:

continued from page 3

Educational Opportunity grants are among those available by the federal government.

Educational loans are another favorite because they are not restricted to needy students.

Subsidized loans are distributed based on need, while unsubsidized loans are made available to all students.

Interest on a subsidized loan is paid by the government while a student is in school, but all accrued interest on an unsubsidized loan is a student's responsibility.

However, both types of loans let students defer payment until six months after graduation.

"I know a lot of people that say they couldn't go to college because they couldn't afford it," said Eric Byrd, 20, a Texas Woman's University sophomore studying criminal justice. "If you really need the money, it's out there."

One of the first things you should do before applying for aid is evaluate the real costs of attending college.

Obtain estimates from institutions or search Web sites such as that of the College Board.

Although students have no control over tuition and fees, there are some things they can do to keep costs down on campus.

Skip Landis, director of financial aid at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas said meal plans, books, supplies and transportation are all flexible expenses.

Students can scrimp by choosing a five-day meal plan instead of a seven-day plan.

Students can also save by buying used textbooks and buying supplies at discount stores.

As for students who want a way to get around off campus, they might find that cars are more trouble than they're worth, Landis said.

Former Fort Worth resident Pamela Rambo, who graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in May, said parking was such a problem that she would often forget where she left her car because she would go days without using it.

"If you move your car, you lose your parking," said Rambo, 23, who paid more than \$200 for a parking permit while she lived on campus.

THE SEBADOH IMPLOSION

By Dawnielle Peck
el Don Feature Editor

Record Review

Sebadoh,
The Sebadoh
Rating
(out of five): 4

The reluctantly crowned kings of lo-fi indie rock, Sebadoh, have just released their latest, and by far best album, *The Sebadoh*.

On their previous albums, Sebadoh sounded like two bands instead of one. The trio was split between Lou Barlow's sorrowful, love-sick ballads and Jason Lowenstein's excited, brash songs. In short, the band seemed schizophrenic, never knowing their own identity.

But all that has changed on *The Sebadoh*. Perhaps their new, symmetrical sound is a result of their recent addition, drummer Russ Pollard. Barlow and Lowenstein reportedly had a difficult time

recording their last album, *Harmacy* because of their former drummer, Bob Fay and his limited musical skills. Ultimately, they took the advice of their producer and fired Fay, thus taking on Pollard for *The Sebadoh*.

Barlow, former Dinosaur Jr. bassist, one half of *The Folk Implosion*, and founding member of Sebadoh, has been typecast as the depressed, heart broken songwriter. Of course, that description isn't entirely untrue on the new album and the melancholy "Love is Stronger" testifies to that. However, Barlow does get down and rock on almost all of his six songs.

"Flame" is a change for Barlow's Sebadoh personality. The song's groovy beat has a similar



From left to right, Russell Pollard, Lou Barlow and Jason Lowenstein.

style to the work he did in *The Folk Implosion*, which was famous for "The Natural One" from the *Kids* soundtrack.

He also ventures into socially conscious waters in the track, "Colorblind." "I wish we were colorblind, we could be ourselves ... black and white and beautiful," Barlow sings with sincerity and passion.

Conversely, after their album *Smash Your Head on the Punk Rock*, many fans may have thought of

Lowenstein as a hardcore punk rocker who can only scream; not sing. Though he may have been that way at one time, As one can hear, Lowenstein has reformed by listening to the opening track, "It's All You." The song is a preview of a new, improved, listener friendly Sebadoh. It has a unique pop element, at least, for Lowenstein.

Another surprise from these indie rockers is a song written by Pollard. "Break Free" displays

Pollard's talent and versatility as a drummer with his subtle touches.

The song is a refreshing effort from the rhythm section and shows that Pollard is not a typical, long-haired, head banging, dope of a drummer. He sums it all up in "Break Free" with the lyrics, "But I can be good, and you can be good."

In the end, Barlow and Lowenstein have rubbed off on each other to create their most well rounded album to date.

Book Review

Last will and testimony

In John Grisham's latest novel the usual court room battles and heavy moral issues are replaced with an exotic journey to Brazil.

By Alesa Kerr
el Don Views Editor

With an \$11 billion will at stake, you've got to figure there's going to be contention. Throw in six greedy children, three scheming ex-wives, an illegitimate daughter with mysterious whereabouts and a lawyer fresh out of rehab and set it against a lush Brazilian landscape and you have the core of John Grisham's new novel, "The Testament."

The book starts off with the personal story of Troy Phelan, a 78-year-old eccentric billionaire with a weakness for twenty-something blondes. He has a string of ended marriages that produced money hungry, bitter children. It's no surprise that his family cares more about when they can get their mitts on his will than they do for their father. What they didn't count on was his utter contempt for them.

Minutes before he jumps to his death, Phelan sets forth a plan to trick his children into thinking that they will each be receiving a large portion of his estate, when in reality he's conspired to give them what they deserve -- nothing. Instead, Phelan decides to leave all his money to his illegitimate daughter, Rachel Lane (that nobody knew existed.)

There's only one problem -- Rachel is a missionary helping Indians somewhere in the vast Brazil-

ian jungle and whether she'll even want the money is anyone's guess.

The lawyers for Troy's estate decide to send Nate O'Riley to look for Rachel. A fierce Washington D.C. litigator with a major drug and alcohol problem, O'Riley is taken out of rehab early to travel into the depths of the Brazil to begin the search. If Rachel can't be found, Troy's children have a good shot of having his will voided, thereby getting their hands on the fortune.

The novel, which surprisingly doesn't pivot purely on legal issues, is at its best when O'Riley is on his quest for Rachel in Brazil.

Grisham paints a rich setting of steamy jungle weather where time is of no importance. A place

as far away in distance as it is in feeling from Washington. Brazil is full of peril for Nate— plane crashing, strange illnesses carried by mosquitos and, most of all, him having to maintain his new-found sobriety.

But in this backwards land he finds the solace to deal with his addictions and get his life on track. Much of the prose is filled with slick catch phrases which give the book a cynical cliched tone.

There are no major heavy moral issues to debate is this book, but the story is intriguing enough to keep the pages turning. It may not be one of Grisham's finest, but it's a good vacation read.

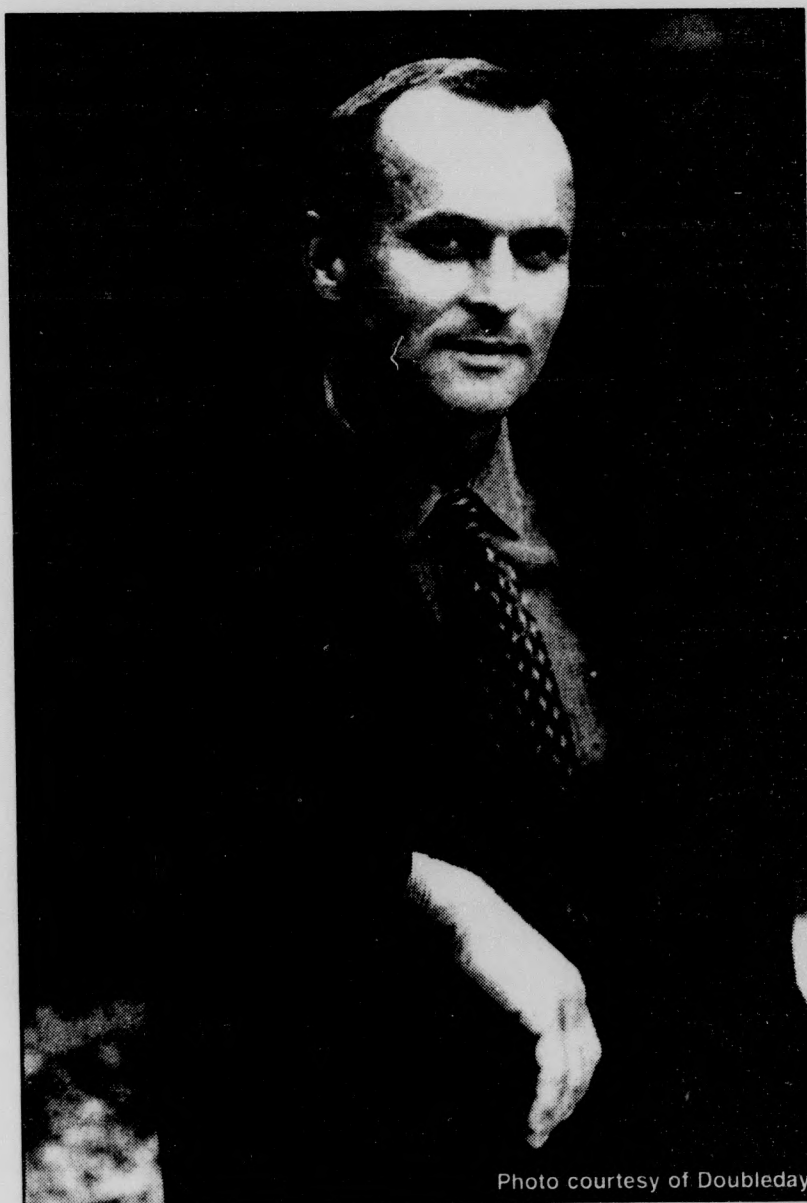


Photo courtesy of Doubleday

Publisher: Doubleday
Retail Price: \$27.95
Publish date: February 1999
Rating (out of 5): 3.5



Laura Dern plays Miss Riley, the supportive high school teacher who inspires Homer (Jake Gyllenhaal) to reach for his dream even when others try to discourage him.

Photo by Dean Newcomb

Nothing But Blue Skies

Based on a true story, "October Sky" is an uplifting tale about Homer Hickman's quest to build rockets instead of mine coal.

By Alesa Kerr
el Don Views Editor

Conjuring up memories of movies like "Stand and Deliver," "October Sky" is a feel-good movie that shows despite the odds, anything is possible when you are determined to follow your goals.

Based on the true story of Homer Hickman Jr. (played by Jake Gyllenhaal), the movie focuses on the bleak life of 1957 Coalwood, West Virginia. The coal mining town is shaken up from its doldrum life with the launch of Soviet satellite, Sputnik.

Hickman realizes his own dreams and plans to build rockets, but soon realizes he knows nothing about them.

Enlisting the help of class nerd Quentin (Chris Owen) and buddies Roy Lee (William Lee Scott) and O'Dell (Chad Lindberg), the gang set out to gather the necessary materials.

After many failed attempts (they blow up almost everything in sight) the group starts to make substantial progress, but their plans are thwarted by the accusation that they started a forest fire in a neighboring town.

With the support of their science teacher Miss Riley (as always, an excellent Laura Dern) the group gets

the encouragement they need to continue following their dream and enter the local science fair. If the boys can take first place at the local fair, they can compete at the national level and possibly win college scholarships -- their only way out of the town.

For Homer, reaching his goal is especially difficult as he seems to have everything going against him. His father, (Chris Cooper) the mine supervisor, wants his son to either follow in his footsteps, or be more like his older brother Jim, the town's football hero. Math and science are also weak spots for the aspiring rocket builder. Given a graduate level rocket science book by Miss Riley, Homer pours over it and slowly begins to understand the difficult concepts.

The crisp cinematography conveys the bleakness of a town that is solely supported by the mines and completely dominates the lives of its citizens, forcing them to abandon any hopes for a better life.

Superb performances were given by the entire cast, but in particular Gyllenhaal and the actors who portray his mother and father stood out.

The film was directed by Joe Johnston whose previous credits include "Jumanji" and "The Rocketeer." Charles Gordon of "Field of Dreams" fame and Larry Franco who assisted with "Batman Returns" both produced the film.

"October Sky" proves that you don't need to use gratuitous nudity or violence to make a great film. A pleasant story with perfect parts of humor, drama and inspiration made it worth the \$7 ticket to see this movie.

Chris Cooper (left) stars as Homer's father, John Hickam, who expects his son to follow in his footsteps as a coal miner.



Photo by Van Redlin

Feature

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1999

SANTA ANA COLLEGE el Don

PAGE 7

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One student's adventure as she turned her dreams of flying into a reality.

By Dawnielle Peck
el Don Feature Editor

Photos by Zach Hoffman
courtesy of Perris Valley Skydiving School

As far back as I can remember, I've always been fascinated with heights. It was this fascination that prompted me to jump out of a plane at 12,500 feet in the air.

I never thought that I would have the opportunity, money, or, in the end, the guts to sky dive. I used to live near The Perris Valley Skydiving School in Southern California and I would watch the jumpers from my back yard. I felt so close to my dream, yet so far away.

That feeling changed last summer when three of my friends asked me if I wanted to go skydiving.

This was my opportunity, a once in a life time chance to do something completely outrageous.

Of course, we would be strapped to a certified instructor who would guide us through our fall. But still, I was going to jump from thousands of feet in the air and float to the ground.

We each paid a \$50 deposit and reserved a jump time. Just like that, I made one of the best decisions of my life without thinking twice.

My parents, on the other hand, were unhappy with the prospect of their oldest child risking her life for thrills. My mom hugged me and said, "If I never see you again, I love you."

My father grumbled, "Who said you could do that?"

I snidely replied, "I did." After all, I was

18 years old, and legally able to take my life into my own hands.

Friends asked if I was scared. I wasn't.

After waiting for what seemed like an eternity, June 6, finally arrived and I prepared for my day with destiny. I worried about what I should wear and what to take with me, and at the same time I was dazed - I would fly that day and there was no turning back.

Besides those of us who were jumping, four friends went with us for support, but mostly to watch.

When we reached the skydiving school, we were handed a stack of forms to fill out and watched a video explaining the legalities of skydiving. I didn't pay attention to the video or what I signed because I was on a high, anticipating what was to come.

After I signed my life away, I paid the \$200 balance - a third of that went to the school's photography package. A "videographer" with a camera attached to his helmet filmed my entire adventure. I wanted to remember this experience forever.

We were given 15 minutes of instruction and taught, step by step, the art of parachuting. Mike, our instructor, showed us how to jump out of the plane, how to arch our backs during free fall, and how to read our altimeters which would tell us when to pull the rip cord. Because we were all

Please see DIVE, Page 8

Dive:

continued from page 7

jumping tandem, harnessed to a certified instructor, our lesson was short and simple.

During my hour wait, I had this rush of adrenaline, and couldn't remember anything - including my flying instructions.

What if I forget to pull the cord? I knew if I forgot, my jump partner would pull it for me, but I wanted to pull it myself.

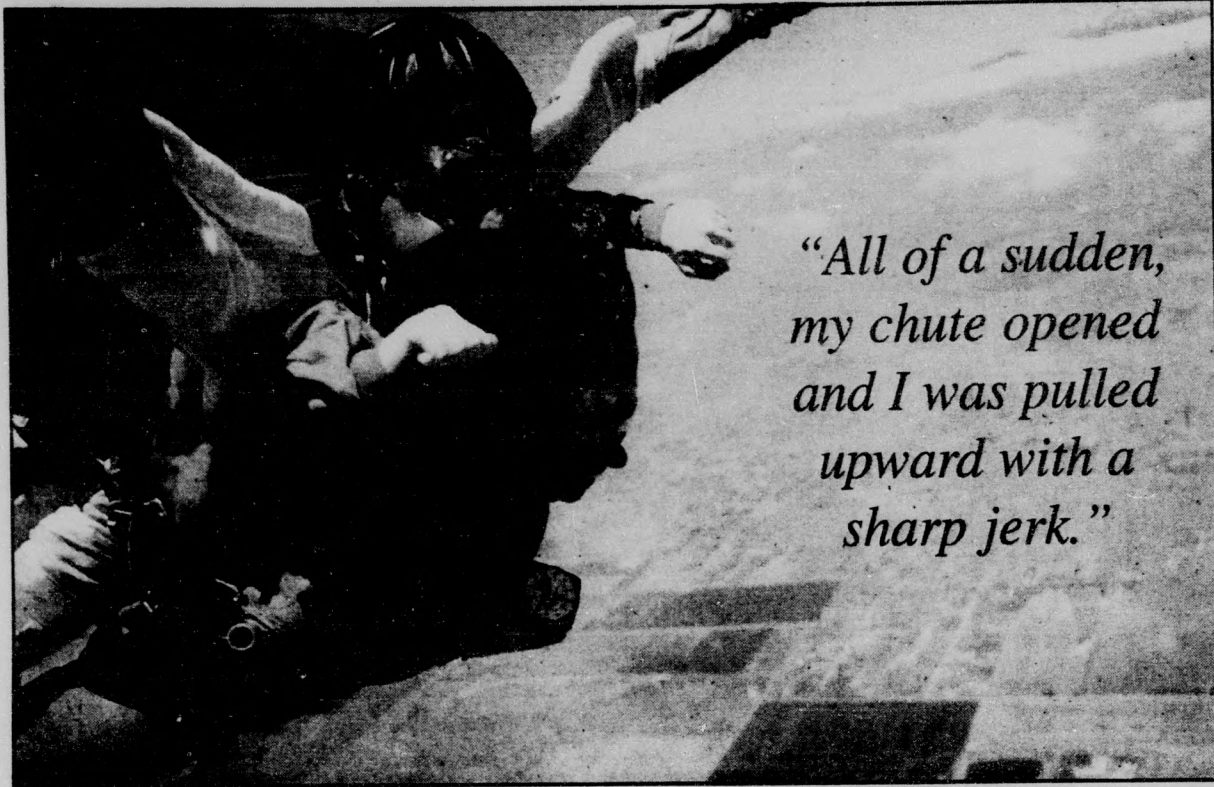
When my name was called I suited up and met my "jumpmaster," Gill. He had a comforting demeanor. If I forgot anything, at least I would have Gill.

During the plane ride, my stomach knotted with excitement. Gill and I chatted and then he reviewed my jumping instructions.

The plane was crowded, small and kind of old I thought as we approached the jump zone at 12,500 feet.

It seemed like the plane ride took forever, yet it all happened so quickly. After we broke through the cloud barrier, Gill fastened his harness to mine.

One by one, people dropped from the plane and disappeared into unrecognizable dots in the distance. Since Gill and I were towards the front of the plane and the door was at the rear, I was one of the last to



"All of a sudden, my chute opened and I was pulled upward with a sharp jerk."

jump. As I stood at the door and peered out, I realized that what lay before me was nothing. Below me a field of white clouds concealed my view of the ground.

The next thing I knew, I was kneeling on the edge of the plane, ready to fly.

"One, two, three."

And then I was surrounded by air. There was nothing for me to grab onto or stand on. All I could do was fall.

The 30 second free fall went by like a flash, yet in that short time, I felt an incredible rush that I have not felt since.

Because I was smiling when I jumped out of the plane and I was falling at such an amazing speed, I had the same goofy expression plastered on my face during the free fall. The cold wind whipped around

my body, and my hands and face felt frozen.

Suddenly, I remembered that I wasn't watching my altimeter and quickly checked the reading. I saw I had a few more seconds before I would have open my chute.

All of a sudden, my chute opened and I was pulled upward with a sharp jerk.

It was such an unexpected movement that at first I didn't know what had happened. In my excitement, I forgot to pull the cord and Gill pulled it for me.

After I came to my senses, I apologized to Gill repeatedly and settled in for what I thought would be a smooth ride down.

I steered the parachute with hand controls which I pulled on to make us turn left or right.

I told Gill I wanted to make sharp, spiral turns and he showed me how. When I made my first turn, it pulled my full body harness into uncomfortable positions. The straps on my waist and thighs hurt and I quickly realized I didn't want to do turns anymore.

Slowly floating down, I had five minutes to recover from my free fall and look down on the world below. It was breathtaking when I realized how small I was in comparison to Earth. I felt insignificant looking at the vast planet beneath me.

I was the last person to land and, of course, the wind picked up as I came down. We were supposed to land on the grassy landing strip but instead, were dragged through

the dirt. Gill landed on his back with me right on top of him.

When the situation was under control, we unhooked and looked at the damage. Gill's leg was bleeding and my shoulder was scratched up and hurt, but that didn't matter. I had just jumped out of a plane! I had done something I always dreamed of, and much to my mother's pleasure, I had survived.

After that day, when I told people about my adventure, they asked me if I was scared at any time.

My answer: "I was anything but scared. I felt incredibly safe, even during my crash landing."

Their response: "I would be so scared. I could never do something like that."

For some, the steep fee of \$199 a jump proves to be too much, but for many, the fear of taking a dive out of a plane is enough to keep them away from the extreme sport.

Basically, for all those who have a fear of skydiving, I say do it. It will help you face your fear and whether you like it or not, it will be an experience you will never forget. And to all those who are not in the financial situation to jump and it is something you really want to do, save up. It's worth it.

When I look back on June 6, I feel surreal. Sometimes I wonder if I even did it - it went by so fast. On the other hand, I feel like now I can do anything.



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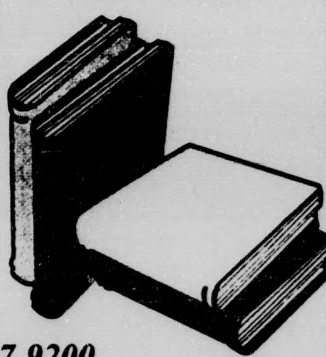
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Our
VIEWS

Breaking down the chain

Free speech is a linked chain — if you begin to dismantle one portion of it, the whole thing may very well fall apart.

The first amendment, which includes free speech, is at the heart of a controversy in Westminster.

The debate hinges on whether or not Trung Van Tran should be allowed to display a North Vietnamese flag and picture of communist leader Ho Chi Minh at his video store.

An Orange County judge upheld Tran's right to display the political items, but when he attempted to go to his store last Monday, the Westminster Police threatened to arrest him, citing it as too much of a danger to the him due to the some 500 protesters that had congregated there. Many in the angry mob carried signs and some even threatened violent physical action be taken against Tran.

Call it poor taste or blind loyalty but Tran is guilty of no criminal act. Indeed, freedom of expression is one of the ideas that our country was founded upon.

Protestors need to remember that regardless of personal feelings, the first amendment protects free speech in all its forms. This includes things that are unpopular, distasteful, and even down right vulgar to some. What is in bad taste or is inappropriate is really for no man to judge.

When people protest something like this, they are essentially saying that free speech means nothing to them -- that it's a right that holds little value to their lives. Once the line is redrawn on the issue, the line slowly begins to disappear altogether.

America is a melting pot that includes diverse people who often have radically diverse ideas. There's bound to be conflict, but much can be learned from hearing thoughts different from our own. Through tolerance, we can learn from others mistakes and become better people all around.

Every proverbial chain is said to have its weakest link. Men like Tran may be society's weak link, but the chain must remain strong for everyone's sake.

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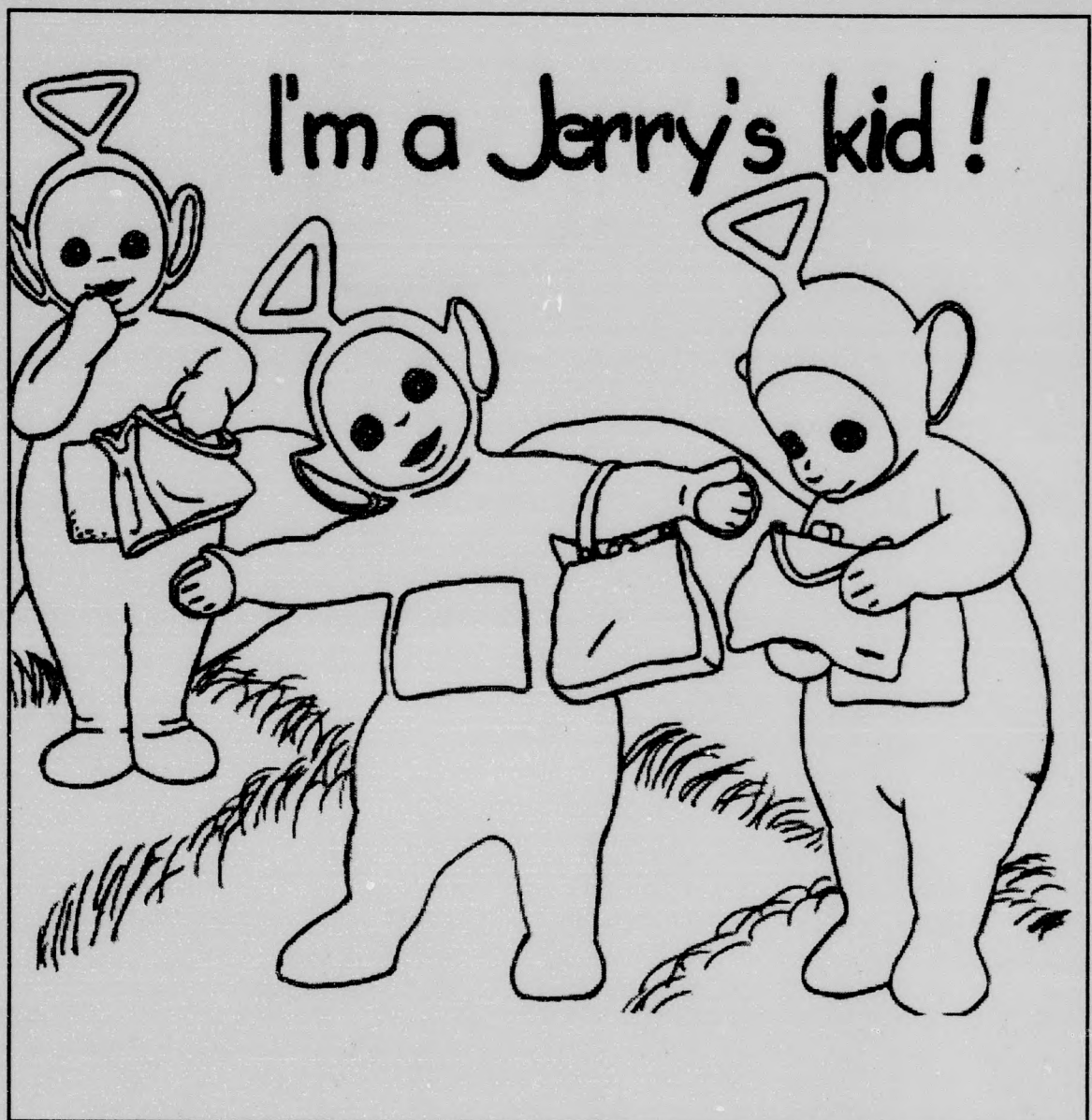


Photo illustration by J.P. Chabot

My
VIEW

The absurd 'outing' of a cartoon figure

By Jim Spencer
Special to the el Don

God bless you, brothers and sisters. Today's column is brought to you by HeteroHeaven, the Rev. Jerry Falwell's new collection of televangelically correct toddlers' toys. If, like Jerry, you believe the manufacturers of the Teletubbie doll Tinky Winky are out to turn your children into homosexuals, HeteroHeaven is for you.

As Jerry pointed out this week, Tinky Winky wears a purple costume, and purple is the color of gay pride.

That's why you'll find nothing but earth tones in the clothing of toy figures. Costumes for the HeteroHeaven collection of dolls come in shades of charcoal, mud, gunmetal gray, olive drab, terra cotta and camouflage in jungle or desert patterns.

Jerry personally oversees the dyeing process.

And unlike those perverts at Itsy Bitsy Entertainment Co., the makers of all Teletubbies, including Tinky Winky, the Rev. Falwell takes quality control very seriously.

As for female accessories on male characters, forget it. The people at Itsy Bitsy will try to tell you Tinky Winky carries a "magic bag," and not a purse, as Jerry charged.

At HeteroHeaven, Jerry Falwell and his faithful followers have bent over backward to remove even the hint of a gender identity crisis at the formative age of two.

Male dolls come in slacks and collared shirts. Female figures all wear high-necked, knee-length dresses. No child will have to wonder who wears the pants in this family of toys.

Nor will they be confused about true family values. Push Tinky Winky's tummy and you get warm fuzzies, a bunch of Teletubbie drivels about hugs and love.

Push the stomach of any of Jerry Falwell's HeteroHeaven dolls and you get the truth: "God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve."

And by the way, if you find a triangle anywhere on a HeteroHeaven figure, feel free to charge the manufacturers with crimes against nature.

Jerry knows that triangles are symbols of gay pride. That's one of the ways he ferreted out the Teletubbies' plan to subvert America's children: Tinky Winky has antenna shaped like triangles.

Not on a HeteroHeaven product. You won't see the "Mark of the Beast" on a single one of them. The Rev. Falwell personally inspects each doll.

What's more, as a service to his God-fearing customers, Jerry makes sure that every HeteroHeaven figure comes with nonflexible knee and elbow joints so that toddlers will not be scarred by accidentally forming triangular shapes with their-toys' limbs.

So if you've got a 2-year-old son and you want a he-man, not a she-man, skip Teletubbie's Tinky Winky and pick up HeteroHeaven's Bible Thumper. He comes in olive drab or jungle camo with a tiny New Testament in one hand and a scale model of a 9mm SIG-Saur semiautomatic handgun in the other. Push his tummy and you get no sweet tones of indeterminate sexuality. You get a manly rasp.

If you like what you see and hear, then look for Thumper's companions Holy Roller and Moral Majority at a toy store near you.

Once again, God bless you, brothers and sisters. And as you make your purchase decisions, just remember the motto here at Jerry Falwell's HeteroHeaven:

"There are fruits, and there are fruitcakes."



Photos by Ismael Arellano

Is history accurate?

Many important people have been omitted from events and stories over the years.

By Joel Randell
Special to the el Don

Ah, February. Cold winter days, but it's Black History Month so it's all good, right? Sure. Depending on whom you ask.

Most Black people will say the time-honored tradition of February's observance of Black accomplishments in America is right on. Some, however, may scoff at the month-long holiday, saying it is inadequate.

This month reminds me of a familiar joke comedian Chris Rock delivered in his HBO special, "Bring the Pain." Rock told of his high school days during Black History Month when he was bombarded with lessons about Martin Luther King Jr. so often that it was the answer he gave for every question the teacher asked.

"What's the capital of Zaire?"

"Martin Luther King!"

"Can you tell me the name of the woman who would not leave her seat on the bus?"

"Oooh, that's hard Are you sure it was a woman? Oh, I know - MarTINA Luther King!"

As funny as Rock's Emmy-winning dialogue was, it rang all-too-true of the distorted knowledge we as Blacks have of ourselves.

King is the undisputed champion of our Black History Month lessons. Every Black person in this country since King's assassination in 1968 has been taught to know of his life. Television specials, school history chapters, corporate endorsements and a national holiday have helped to impress King's legacy on the American psyche forever.

Ever wonder why King has been pumped up so thoroughly and not Malcolm X or Marcus Garvey or Huey P. Newton or Nat Turner?



"...It's Black History Month so it's all good, right? Sure. Depending on whom you ask."

There is a very particular reason why. King, with his Christian principles and non-violence-in-the-face-of-violence movement, is the role model this establishment wants us to embrace - and has made us embrace by validating him nationally. Our leaders like Malcolm X and Nat Turner are demonized or left out of our history because they taught us to resist and fight injustice.

See the control?

If not, let me break it down further because it goes much deeper. Do the knowledge to Black History Month. The observance began in 1926 as Negro History Week. It was the brainchild

of a noted Black scholar and historian named Carter G. Woodson, who chose February for the initial observance because it included the birthdays of Frederick Douglas and Abraham Lincoln. (Abraham Lincoln?) The observance became known as Black History Week during the early 1970s and was finally established as Black History Month in 1976.

When this establishment dubbed us Negroes, the final stage of our severance from Africa was completed. The process of severing us from our original religion, language and culture had been completed long before through our enslavement, and our memory of Africa was completely washed away. By calling us Negroes, we would no longer be able to even relate to Africa. The word, when used to describe a people, does not transcend American shores.

First they called us Coloreds, then Negroes, then niggers, then, in mockery of our hairstyles, Afro-Americans. Later, it was African Americans. Now it's Blacks. And each time, Black people have adopted the labels given us by this establishment.

Our current Black History Month lessons don't teach us about our true history. They only teach us that we are the descendants of slaves.

Our true history lies east across the Atlantic Ocean, long before the United States was even thought of. Hannibal was one of the world's most ingenious war generals, marching thousands of his troops on elephants through the Alps to invade and defeat Rome. Mansa Musa was the sultan of Mali, one of the richest empires in history. Timbuktu was a fabulous learning center that had colleges and universities in which scholars from all over the Eastern Hemisphere went to study.

Those are just samples of the richness of our African history.

So this Black History Month, while you are reminiscing on the great accomplishments of King, Charles Drew, Frederick Douglas, Benjamin Banneker and the like, remember Africa. Our true history. Otherwise, it's not Black history - it's his story.

Running toward victory

MENS TRACK: Coach Al Siddons leads team through stiff competition

By Randy Scott
el Don Sports Editor

Spring sports are well underway at Santa Ana College, even though the semester has just begun. For the track and field team, preparations for their season began in early January.

The team has already competed in three meets, which is not bad considering the semester began three weeks ago.

Track and field consists of many different events. The track portion includes running contests, mainly short distance dashes, hurdles, and relays. The field part houses such tests as the shot put, discus, and javelin. The athletes often compete in more than one of these, so a great deal of practice is needed.

The Dons are coming off a second place finish from their last meet at Santa Ana against Golden West and Saddleback colleges. There were several athletes that stood out for the Dons.

Luis Perez excelled in several events and was named as one of the Don athletes of the meet. Sam Uai led the way in the shot put, while Eric Brown had a good showing in the discus.

However, the top performer for SAC was Robert Villegas. He excelled in the pole vault, long jump, and 4x100 relay. His performance also earned him honors as the other athlete of the meet.

Santa Ana has a tough schedule the next few weeks as they head to Mira Costa on Friday to face Mira Costa, San Diego Mesa, and San Bernadino. Then on March 5, the Dons host Cuyamaca College and Orange Coast College.

These meets should give SAC a good idea about how good of a team coach Al Siddons has put together, and what can be expected the rest of the semester.



Mens track and field run ahead of the pack against Glendale College in their first meet of the year.

Tom Street / el Don



Ismael Arellano / el Don

Baseball hall of fame member Rod Carew signs autographs for students and fans.

Major league conference on campus

By Randy Scott
el Don Sports Editor

The Anaheim Angels visited Santa Ana College on Feb. 2 in an effort to reach out to the Hispanic community.

It was also an opportunity to look back at the 1998 season and take a look ahead at 1999. Baseball legend Rod Carew, general manager Bill Bavasi and announcers Jose Tolentino and Steve Physioc were on hand for the festivities.

With Spring Training starting in less than three weeks this was a unique opportunity for the Angels to get in touch with

their community as well as promote their upcoming season.

However, the focus of the event was on the Hispanic culture and what they mean to the Angels and what the franchise is trying to do for them. The organization has done numerous things for the community such as donating money to little leagues in the Orange County area, providing the means to restore Flower Park in downtown Santa Ana, and simpler things such as making bilingual signs at Edison International Field of Anaheim.

The point that was put to the audience was that the Angels

want the Hispanic community to come out to the ball game. In recent years, the team's Latino fan base has slipped for various reasons and the Angels are increasing their effort to get them back.

Carew, who was born in Panama, stressed the connection between the Latin culture and family. "It's something for the family to enjoy," Carew said of baseball. "We need to bring the family back."

Tolentino is from Mexico and he addressed the crowd in Spanish, expressing the importance of being bilingual and how it has helped him succeed.

Overall this was an upbeat event about the upcoming baseball season. Tickets as well as baseballs signed by Carew were given out as prizes and the panel stuck around to mingle with the audience.

Optimism was high as Physioc proclaimed that the Angels "were the leading candidate to win the American League West." The rest of the panel agreed.

The success of the conference will be determined in ticket sales and television ratings. But judging by the turnout, the two hours they spent on campus was well worth it.

Santa Ana looks for a grand slam in 1999

BASEBALL: Can the Dons win their fourth state championship this decade?

By Randy Scott
el Don Sports Editor

Flowers are starting to bloom. Birds are singing. Spring is here, and along with these rights of change, America's favorite pastime, baseball, begins anew.

While the major league players converge on Arizona and Florida for the next six weeks to train, the college season is in full swing. Santa Ana College has played in three tournaments as well as two non-conference games in the first three weeks of their season.

The Dons enter this year with high expectations. They have been one of the best baseball programs this decade, winning three state titles in the last six years.

If the first few weeks are any indication on what the Dons will do all season, the team should be exciting to watch. Santa Ana has no trouble putting runs on the board.

Offense is the strength of the team, and they have shown it by putting up double digit run totals several times already, including a 13-3 thrashing of College of the Canyons in the South Coast Invitational Tournament.

Hot hitting center fielder Richard Lane and home run slugging left fielder Joe Urban lead the barrage. According to Lane, he has been in a zone so far this season.

"Everything is in slow motion at the plate. I'm just trying to hit every pitch with authority," Lane said.

Success for the Dons hinges

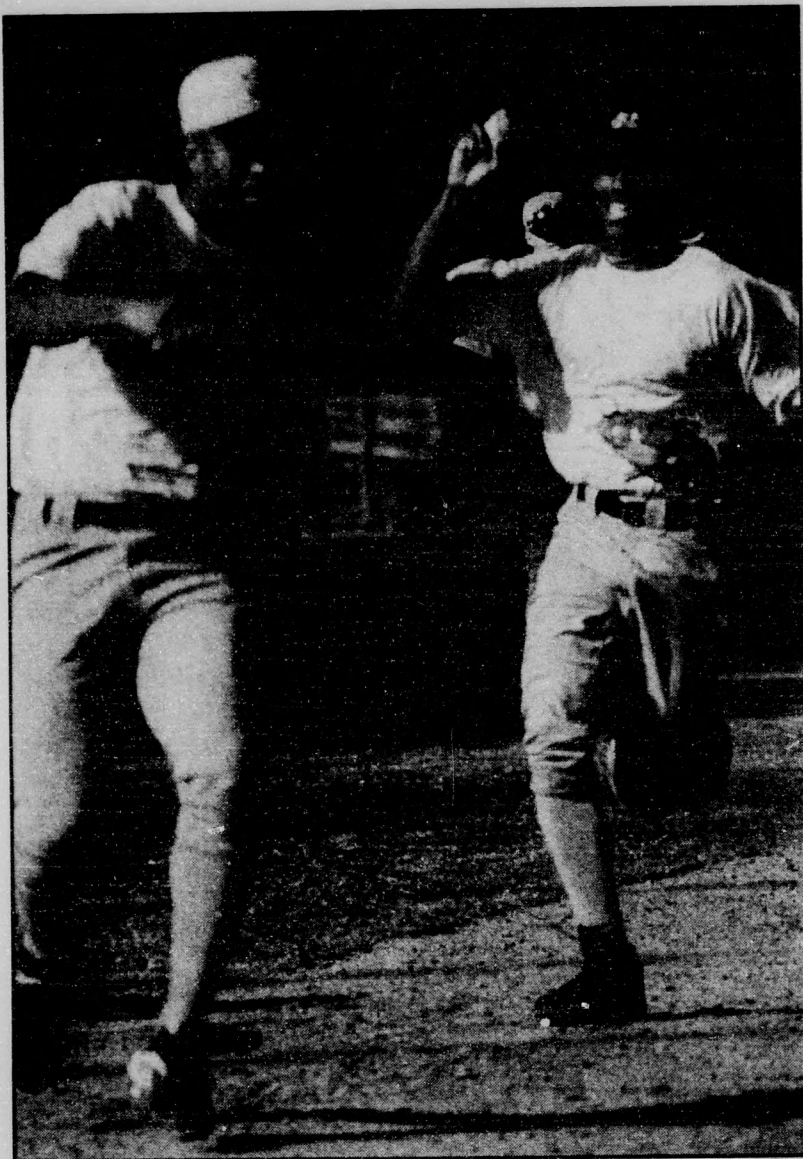
on their pitching staff. Tearing the cover off the ball is fun to watch, but pitching and defense win championships. A recent 18-10 loss to Long Beach City College shows where head coach Don Sneddon will need to put the focus.

If he can get outings like the one Jeremy Weinberg gave in the game against College of the Canyons, Sneddon may be able to rest easy. Weinberg pitched eight strong innings and giving up only one earned run.

"I just try to go out there and hit my spots with everything I've got," Weinberg said.

That's what it takes to have a winning ballclub, and it looks like the Dons are up to the task.

-el Don staff writer Alex Arreola contributed to this article



Ismael Arellano / el Don

The Dons baseball team prepares for the long season ahead.

Lady Dons set records, head to playoffs

By Randy Scott
el Don Sports Editor

The Santa Ana College women's basketball team had plenty to cheer about last Wednesday night as the team ended a two game losing streak with a 73-71 victory over Cypress College.

Rochelle Anthony scored 32 points to lead the team to victory as well as set the Dons career scoring record. Of course, this comes as no surprise to head coach Jack Single.

"Rochelle has a 'refuse to lose' attitude and played in three high school state title games," said Single. "She'll probably shatter scoring records this year, but winning is more important to her."

She was able to do both against the Chargers. Anthony dominated the game early, scoring 11 of her team's first 15 points. The Lady Dons scored 13 straight points early on in the game to grab a 15-4 lead. Cypress battled back, but the Dons lead 31-27 at the half.

Fatigue started to set in on the Lady Dons in the second half as the team had only six players available due to a slew of injuries. Cypress capitalized on this and was able to take the lead.

Santa Ana fought back and tied things up at 64-64 with five minutes left to play. The team fell behind by one before Anthony connected with a three-pointer to put the Lady Dons up for good with two minutes left to play. But for the second straight game, the outcome came down to a final shot at the buzzer. This time SAC held their

ground and was able to keep Cypress from getting a good shot off.

This game was sophomore night, as Anthony, Erica Beltran, Karen Herco, and Fiaavae Tipoti were honored as they played in their last regular season game at home in Bill Cook Gymnasium.

With the win over the Chargers, the Lady Dons set a team record for wins in a season. With only one regular season game left to play, the Lady Dons (21-8, 10-3) assured themselves of a second place finish in the Orange Empire Conference as well as a spot in the playoffs which begin on Friday.

Santa Ana now prepares for the post-season. As long as the Lady Dons have Anthony in the lineup, anything is possible.

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